

**SPRINGFIELD TOWNSHIP
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
December 19, 2023**

The Springfield Township Planning Commission met for their regularly scheduled meeting at 7:00 P.M., in the Boardroom of the Springfield Township Administration Building, located at 1510 Paper Mill Road, Wyndmoor, PA 19038. Present at the meeting were Ms. Murray, Mr. Sands, Mr. Devine, Mr. Schaefer, Ms. Blankin, Mr. Quill, Mr. Mascaro and Ms. Helwig. Also in attendance were Michael Narcowich, Community Planner from Montgomery County Planning Commission, and Mark Penecale, Director of Planning & Zoning.

Approval of the Minutes:

The Planning Commission approved the minutes from their meeting held on Tuesday, December 5, 2023.

Commissioner's Report:

Mr. Penecale informed the Planning Commission that the Board of Commissioners have approved the proposed budget for 2024 with only a minor increase in the Refuse Service Fee.

New Business:

PC1: Gerald Rath, Esq. was present, with Mr. Sinja Jain, the owner of both 40 Grove Ave, LLC and 42 Grove Ave, LLC. These gentlemen presented the subdivision plan for the relocation of the shared lot line between the two properties. The plan calls for the removal of 2,941 square feet of ground from 42 Grove Avenue and that same 2,941 square feet to be added to 40 Grove Avenue. This would allow the entire detached garage of 2,741 square feet to be contained on one property. This would eliminate the garage encroaching on the shared property line of both 40 and 42 Grove Avenue.

Mr. Rath explained that Mr. Jain had requested a variance from the Springfield Township Zoning Hearing Board and the application was denied. Mr. Jain filed an appeal of the Zoning Hearing Board's decision with Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas. This proposed subdivision plan is a solution to that appeal. Mr. Rath offered the plan as being total compliance with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision & Land Development Ordinance.

Mr. Schaefer asked Mr. Rath to explain the zoning-related issues and the past approvals for these two properties.

Mr. Rath explained that a prior owner had obtained Zoning Hearing Board approval to construct a connective roof between the garages on 40 and 42 Grove Avenue. The properties at the time were in common ownership. The Zoning Hearing Board placed a condition on the approval that

required the connective roof line to be removed if the properties were ever sold. When Mr. Jain was informed by Mr. Penecale that the connective garage was required to be removed, the Zoning Hearing Board application was filed to alter the prior condition. The Zoning Hearing Board denied Mr. Jain's application.

Mr. Schaefer asked if there were any additional issues addressed by the Zoning Hearing Board, such as setbacks or coverage? Mr. Schaefer noted that the setbacks are not shown for the existing garage to the rear property line.

Ms. Helwig asked if Mr. Jain has purchased any additional properties on Grove Avenue. The answer to the question was yes, he has purchased both 36 Grove Avenue and 44 Grove Avenue.

Mr. Penecale asked when the properties were purchased. Mr. Jain stated that 36 Grove Avenue was purchased in April of 2023, and he did not have a date on when 44 Grove Avenue was purchased. Mr. Penecale asked why the plan was not updated. The plan is dated 7/21/2023 and the correct ownership information should be on the plans submitted.

Mr. Mascaro asked how 40 Grove Avenue would access the garages to the left on the plan without using the driveway for 42 Grove Avenue?

Mr. Rath stated that an easement agreement would be recorded with the plan that would allow the owners of 40 Grove Avenue to use the driveway of 42 Grove Avenue for ingress and egress.

Ms. Helwig asked about what residential accessory uses require a five-bay garage.

Mr. Jain replied that is a car collector and uses the garages for the storage of his classic vehicles.

Ms. Helwig asked if there were any additional questions from the Planning Commission. There were none. She read Mr. Kostyk's letter of opposition into the record and marked the letter as Exhibit R-1. She asked if there was anyone in attendance that wished to speak in favor or opposed to this application.

Mr. Kostyk, owner of 37 Grove Avenue, stated that he is opposed to the approval of this application. He does not believe that Mr. Jain was not aware of the requirement to remove the connective garage roof. He stated that Mr. Jain has used the property for short term rental and advertised the properties on Airbnb websites. He stated that Mr. Jain has multiple vans working from the site daily. He stated that the auto body work that took place on the property was a fire hazard. He is not in favor of any waivers being granted for this project.

Mr. Quill asked Mr. Kostyk how he knew they were short term rentals. Mr. Kostyk stated that the properties were advertised and listed on the internet.

Mr. Sands stated that he is not in favor of granting a waiver for installation of sidewalks. He would like to see the required 150 feet of sidewalk installed.

Ms. Sandra McClelland, owner of 32 Grove Avenue stated that she is neither in favor of or opposed to the application, but she wanted Mr. Jain to know that she is very disappointed in him and the tenants he has in the building. She stated they are rude and disrespectful. In her opinion, they have no interest in blending into the neighborhood.

Ms. Helwig asked if there is any additional discussion. There being none, she called for a recommendation on the application.

Mr. Schaefer made a motion to recommend denial of the application based on the plan's inability to comply with Section 95-11. D. {2} of the Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

Mr. Sands offered that the waiver for the installation of sidewalks should also be denied.

The motion was made and seconded the recommendation for denial of plan. This was passed by a vote of 7 of 8. However, if the Board of Commissioners elect to approve the plan, the waiver for the installation of sidewalks be denied. This was adopted by a vote of 8 of 8.

PC2: Susanne Ryan of PECO was in attendance to present the plan for the improvements to 310 Roesch Avenue, Oreland, PA. PECO proposes to add two trailers to the property. The trailer of 1,440 square feet will be added along the Anderson Avenue side of the property and is proposed to be used as classroom space. A 240 square foot trailer will be added as restroom facilities. Parking has been added to the site and the main entrance has been shifted from Roesch Avenue to Anderson Avenue. Ms. Ryan stated that addition landscaping and fencing has been added to the Roesch Avenue frontage as discussed at the neighborhood meeting that was held. In addition, PECO has conducted an environmental study, a traffic impact study, and a noise and vibration study that have all been submitted to the Township for review. Those studies are also available to the residents.

Ms. Ryan also stated that the site would be used by PECO as a driver's safety training facility. The hours of operation will be weekdays only and will start no earlier than 7:30 a.m. and be over no later than 5:00 p.m. PECO has been contacted by the local Fire Station about the possibility of using the site for driver safety training. That will have to be explored.

Phillip Bain, P.E. for the project explained the improvements to the site. He discussed traffic flow and the on-site parking that has been added. He explaining the improvements to the existing on-site stormwater management system and the site lighting. Mr. Bain discussed the utility connections and entrance to the site on Anderson Avenue.

Mr. Mascaro asked about the size of the parking stalls on-site. Mr. Phillips explained that the staff parking stalls are 10' by 20' and the training vehicle stalls are layout at 13' in width by 32' in length.

Mr. Quill asked if PECO is receptive to allowing the Fire Companies to train on the site. Ms. Ryan explained that will depend on the type of training and what hours the Fire Companies are looking to use the site.

Ms. Helwig asked if there were any questions from the residents in attendance.

Mr. Warren, owner of 1435 Anderson Avenue informed the Planning Commission that Anderson Avenue is a private street. The intersection of Anderson and Roesch Avenues needs to be repaired. He asked if new fencing and landscaping is proposed for the Anderson Avenue property line. He also informed everyone that the sanitary sewer line that PECO proposes to connect to is a private line, maintained by the property owners on Anderson Avenue.

Mr. Bain committed to researching the ownership issue of the sanitary sewer line in Anderson Avenue. He also informed everyone that new fencing and landscaping is not proposed for the Anderson Avenue property line at this time.

Mr. Mooney, owner of 321 Roesch Avenue thanked PECO for working with the neighbors and informed the Planning Commission members that the Fire Company already practices at the dead end of Roesch Avenue. He also informed the Planning Commission members that PECO has supplied the neighbors with a "Point of Contact" for their use if there are issues with the site.

Ms. Ryan informed everyone that she is currently that "Point of Contact" and that once the site is in use and a new name and contact number will be provided to the neighbors and the Township.

Ms. Helwig asked if there were any additional questions or comments, seeing none, she thanked everyone for attending the meeting and asked if there was a recommendation.

A motion was made and seconded to recommend approval of the requested waiver for the submission of the Land Development Application and Plan. This vote was unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:47 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted
Mark A. Penecale
Director of Planning & Zoning